

Dear Readers,

Growing up in Southern California, I learned early in life about the human cost of an unhealthy environment. The brown cloud that covered the Los Angeles Basin for too many days each summer affected everyone who worked and played there.

But over the years I've also watched the skies grow clearer and smog alerts become a thing of the past. In 2001, the Los Angeles area met national health standards nine out of every ten days — the cleanest year since smog measurements began over 40 years ago. While there is much more work to be done, we've come a long way.



I am honored to introduce this EPA Progress Report, the first that we have issued since I joined EPA as Regional Administrator in October 2001. The past year's accomplishments are full of promise for meeting the public health and environmental challenges we face in the Pacific Southwest, and I am eager to continue our progress in this important mission.

EPA's Pacific Southwest Region is truly diverse, encompassing the states of Arizona, California, Hawaii and Nevada; 147 tribal nations and communities; and Pacific islands such as American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

The problems we confront here are complex, interconnected, and resistant to traditional solutions. As we move to meet these challenges, we are fortunate both in our own strengths and in the capacity and will of our partners — the states, tribes, industry and the environmental advocacy communities. The test will be to

maintain clarity about priorities, stay focused on results, and promote creativity and collaboration in environmental stewardship.

We are encouraging innovative, cost-effective ways of preventing pollution – for example, working with scientists and farmers to demonstrate ways to reduce toxic pesticide use, while cutting production costs. We are emphasizing partnerships with states and tribes, the private sector, and a multitude of other stakeholders. We are working to ensure that the nation's environmental laws are consistently enforced across state and tribal boundaries. We are giving special attention to new challenges such as bioterrorism preparedness, and to the unique needs of areas such as the U.S.–Mexico Border and Lake Tahoe. And we are making EPA's vast information resources more accessible than ever, through avenues like our Web site and the new Environmental Information Center at our San Francisco office.

In 2002, I hope you will join us in striving to protect public health and our exceptionally beautiful Pacific Southwest environment. We all have an important stake in it.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Nasti', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Wayne Nasti
Regional Administrator
EPA Pacific Southwest Region